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Intrigues of Autumn

By Max Mickel

The French Connection. That's the theme of this year's upcoming Meridian House Ball, and the organizers of last night's Blair House reception in honor of the ball's sponsors touched upon that theme in ways innocent enough: loaves of French bread had been sent out earlier; departing guests received splits of Lanson champagne.

But the shadowy side of the analogy, the complications and convolutions, twisted and curled through the crowd as surely as the soft gusts of wind that whispered through the garden court and then were gone.

The intelligence connection:

"I've been sweating it out on the Hill today for six hours," said Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner to a small group in the dusky garden. Then the candor was gone.

"I feel this [the question of Soviet troops in Cuba] is so delicate an issue that I don't want to talk to the press," he said when queried.

EXCERPT